

To: Members of the Judiciary Committee  
From: Leslie Hotary, Salem, CT

Re: Testimony in support of HB-6355

Date: March 3, 2021

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Leslie Hotary. I am a resident of Salem, CT.

I am writing in support of H.B. 6355, An Act Concerning a Risk Protection Orders or Warrants. I support this bill because modernizing our current red flag law is a commonsense measure that can save lives. This is even more critical than ever, given the current pandemic and the stresses it causes on individuals and families.

The most notable change to the current law is to allow family and household members to directly petition the court to issue an Extreme Risk Protection Order ("ERPO"). Under current law, only law enforcement officials can do this, and only after conducting an independent investigation. Family members of people in crisis are denied direct access to the red flag process because they are unable to directly request an order from the court. Those who may first recognize dangerous warning signs are thereby deprived of a chance to utilize this lifesaving tool. An ERPO is designed to intervene during a crisis, when time is of the essence; eliminating the middleman and allowing family members to approach the courts themselves will save precious time.

Red flag laws are on the books in 18 states plus Washington, D.C.; in 12 of those states and D.C., family members may directly petition the court. Connecticut set an example for the nation when it passed one of the first red flag laws, but we must now modernize the bill by including family and household members as petitioners.

Please support H.B. 6355. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie Hotary

Salem, CT